



By Lily Gordon  
Monday, June 28, 2010

The Department of Labor has granted an extension of the Career Advancement Account (CAA) MilSpouse grant program which will provide \$2.8 million in tuition assistance to a total of 900 Fort Benning spouses in 2010.

Launched in November 2007, the CAA MilSpouse program was designed to help the spouses of service members obtain certification and credentials in high demand, high-growth, portable careers. The program, which was started by the DoL and the Department of Defense, provides flexible education funding accounts that pay up to \$3,000 a year for tuition, fees, books, equipment, credentialing and licensing fees for spouses in eight states. Those original states were:

-California -Colorado -Florida -Georgia -Hawaii -Maine -North Carolina -Washington

In May 2010, the program was abruptly shut down, however, it was extended for seven of the eight states, with the exclusion of Georgia, according to Georgia Congressman Sanford D. Bishop's office. When the congressman heard about this, he sent a letter to the Assistant Secretary of Labor, Jane Oates, urging her to extend the resources to Fort Benning military spouses.

At the time there were 700 Fort Benning spouses receiving assistance from the CAA MilSpouse program.

"As you know, the program has been extremely important and essential to military installations and military spouses," Bishop wrote in his letter to Oates, dated June 7. "I would be grateful for your thoughtful reconsideration of extending this grant program at Fort Benning for another year. At minimum, please ensure that the 700 current spouses at Fort Benning, who are in the middle of their education and training and are being funded by the CAA MilSpouse program, do not lose this vital assistance."

On June 17, the DoL granted the extension and additionally included 200 more military spouses in it, for a total of 900 Fort Benning spouses who will receive tuition assistance, according to Bishop's office.